

Message Text

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72

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IGA-02 AID-20 SCI-06 IO-14 SWF-02 AGR-20

COME-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 DRC-01

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R 081210Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

TO AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9357

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

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E O 11652 N A

TAGS: ETRAN: KV, IV, ML

SUBJ: TRIP REPORT: MONROVIA-BAMAKO BY LANDROVER

1. DCM AMEMBASSY BAMAKO KUNIHOLM AND CHAUFFEUR DROVE EMBASSY'S NEW LANDROVER FROM MONROVIA TO BAMAKO (812 MILES) IN TWO-DAY TRIP, JULY 3-4 INCLUDING OVERNIGHT IN MAN, IVORY COAST AVERAGING 32 MPH ON MONROVIA-MAN STRETCH AND 38 MPH ON MAN-BAMAKO LINK ENCOURTERING NO FLATS NOR MECHANICAL PROBLEMS. ROAD ITINERARY WAS: MONROVIA, GANTA, SAGLEPIE, TAPETA, TOBLI, TOBOWN (BORDER POST); IVORY COAST: TOULEPLEU (BORDER POST); ZEALE; DANANE, MAN (OVERNIGHT); ODIENNE; TIEFINZO (BORDER POST); MALI: MANANKORO (BORDER POST); BOUGOUNI; AND BAMAKO. CUSTOMS/POLICE/IMMIGRATION FORMALITIES AT TOETOWN, MONROVIA; TOULEPLEU, IVORY COAST; TIEFINZO, IVORY COAST; AND MANANKORO, MALI TOOK TOTAL TIME OF 2.5 HOURS. ALTHOUGH RAINY SEASONHAD COMMENCED AND ROADS WERE MUDDY, ROUTE IS EASILY DONE IN LANDROVER-TYPE VEHICLE AND MAY EVEN BE POSSIBLE THOUGH NOT RECOMMENDED IN STANDARD-SHIFT VEHICLE. NEVER USED FOUR WHEEL DRIVE DURING ENTIRE TRIP IN SPITE OF MIRED ROADS AND

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INNUMERABLE HAZARDOUS CULVERTS AND SMALL BRIDGES.

DEPARTURE/ARRIVAL TIMES JULY 3 WERE MONROVIA/0600
DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL MAN/2030. DEPARTURE/ARRIVAL
TIMES JULY 4 WERE MAN/0730 DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL BAMAKO/
1930. ACCOMMODATIONS AT HOTEL CAVALCADE IN MAN WERE
EXCELLENT.

2. BASED ON THIS TRIP BELIEVE CONVOYING DROUGHT-RELIEF
GRAIN MONROVIA/BAMAKO IMPRACTICAL SHORT-RUN FOR TWO
MAJOR REASONS: (1) REPAIR, UPKEEP, AND IN SOME CASES
ACTUAL RECONSTRUCTION OF HUNDREDS OF SMALL BRIDGES AND
CULVERTS WOULD BE REQUIRED. ROUTE THOUGH EASILY TRAVER-
SABLE IN LIGHT PASSENGER VEHICLE, WOULD POSE CONSTANT
OBSTACLE FOR HEAVY LADEN GRAIN CONVOYS FOR WHICH MANY CULVERTS
AND BRDGES WOULD BE EITHER TOO WEAK OR TOO NARROW. FOR
EXAMPLE, BETWEEN TOULEPLEU AND DANANE ENCOUNTERED AT LEAST
30 LOG BRIDGES IN PARTIAL DECAY THAT WOULD CRUMBLE UNDER
PRESSURE HEAVY LOAD. ONLY WITH SPECIAL REPAIR AND ROAD
MAINTENANCE TEAMS WORKING IN THREE COUNTRIES COULD THESE
ROADS REMAIN OPEN TO HEAVY GRAIN CONVOYS. (B) ORDER
FORMALITIES INCLUDING CORRUPT OFFICIALS MIGHT POSE
SECOND MAJOR PROBLEM. FOR EXAMPLE, IN SPITE OF
DIPLOMATIC PLATES AND PASSPORT AND PROPER DOCUMENTATION,
OBVIOUS THAT BORDER POSTS ENGAGED IN DELAYING TACTICS
IN EFFORT ELLICIT BRIBES (WITHOUT ANY SUCCESS). BORDER
POLICE IN TOULEPLEU, IVORY COAST WERE DRUNK, RUDE, AND
SHAMELESS IN EXTORTION DEMANDS. ONE YOUNG AMERICAN
THERE HAD BEEN AWAITING BORDER CLEARANCE FOR FIVE HOURS,
AND DCM PREVAILED ONLY AFTER EMPHASIZING IMPORTANCE HIS
RETURNING BAMAKO SOONEST FOR IMPORTANT DROUGHT-RELIEFC
MISSION. AT MANANKORO, MALI CUSTOMS KEPT DCM AWAITING
FOR 30 MINUTES WHILE SIMPLE STAMP AND SIGNATURE WERE
PLACED ON TRANSHIPMENT DOCUMENT.

3. GREATLY APPRECIATE HOSPITALITY NALLES AND OUTSTANDING
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, AMEMBASSY MONROVIA.
MCGUIRE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ITINERARY, VISITS, DIPLOMATIC DOCUMENTATION, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL HARASSMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: blochd0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BAMAKO01958
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740181-0138
From: BAMAKO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740770/aaaachqn.tel
Line Count: 97
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: blochd0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 JUN 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 AUG 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <19 FEB 2003 by martinml>; WITHDRAWN <13 Jun 2005 by BoyleJA, PRIVACY>; RELEASED <17 JUN 2005 by powellba2>; APPROVED <20 JUN 2005 by blochd0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TRIP REPORT: MONROVIA-BAMAKO BY LANDROVER
TAGS: ETRN, OTRA, IV, ML
To: MONROVIA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005